

Message Text

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73/44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01 SY-05 SAB-01

AID-05 EB-07 AGR-05 FEA-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 FAA-00

DOT-00 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 /111 W

----- 041050

O P 261415Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8337

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0825

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (GARBLED TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANON BEGINS TO DIG OUT

REF: BEIRUT 771 (1250Z)

SUMMARY: WITH SYRIAN-SPONSORED CEASEFIRE NOW SEVERAL DAYS OLD, COUNTRY EXPERIEN EING UPSURGE OF FEELING THAT LEBANESE MAY AT LAST BE OUT OF THE STORN RATHER THAN MERELY IN THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE. NEVERTHELESS, AMNY PROBLEMS REMAIN AND POLITICAL HORSE-TRADING CONTINUES AS HIGHER MILITARY COMMITEE HAS ANNOUNCED TIME-TABLE FOR REMOVAL OF ARMED ELEMENTS FROM STREETS AND COUNTRYSIDE. ALMOST EQUALLY PRESSING PROBLEM IS RESTORATION OF DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS FOR FOODSTUFFS AND FUEL TO WHICH AUTHORITIES ARE NOW TURNING THEIR ATTENTION. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH MINOR INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED JAN 25 IN BEIRUT AND OTHER PARTS OF LEBANON, SUNDAY WAS BEAUTIFUL WINTER DAY AND MANY CITIZENS OF WEST BEIRUT FLOCKED TO SEASIDE PROMENADES TO SOAK UP SUN AND FRESH AIR UNDER WATCHFUL OF HEAVILY-ARMED PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY (PLA) PATROLS. MORNING JAN 26, ARMY G-2 REPORTED CALM THROUGHOUT COUNTRY WITH EXCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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HOTEL DISTRICT WHICH WAS CHARACTERIZED AS FLUID. BEIRUT

RADIO ANNOUNCED AT 1300 HOURS JAN 26 THAT ARMED ELEMENTS HAD PULLED OUT OF HOLIDAY INN AND MURR TOWER, A GOOD OMEN, IF TRUE. PLA TRUCK-BORNE PATROLS HAVE EXTENDED THEIR CONRICHE RUNS TO AUB SEA GATE AREA JUST ABOVE CHANCERY, BUT ARMY REMAINS IN PLACE PROVIDING EMBASSY SECURITY. IN BEKAA AND AKKAR, SEVERAL CHRISTIAN TOWNS AND VILLAGES ARE STILL SURROUNDED BUT NO MAJOR ATTACKS ARE REPORTED AND IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT AUTHORITIES OVERSEEING CEASEFIRE ARE ACTING TO PREVENT INCIDENTS.

2. TRIPARTITE (LEBANESE/SYRIAN/PLO) MILIARY

COMMITTEE MET SUNDAY JAN 25 AND ADDED TWO ADDITIONAL LEBANESE ARMY COLONEL, HABIB FARES (CHRISTIAN) AND MICHEL NASSIF (SUNNI), TO GIVE BODY MORE LEBANESE COMPLEXION. ALSO PRESENT AT SESSION ON EXCEPTIONAL BASIS WERE KARIM PAKRADOUNI AND JEAN NADER OF THE PHALANGE AND DANY CHAMOUN OF THE NATIONAL LIBERALS. THESE THREE SUBSEQUENTLY JOINED MARONITE LEADERS GATHERED AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH SYRAIN FONMIN KHADDAM IN OBVIOUS BID TO REINFORCE CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT TO CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF SYRIAN INITIATIVE.

3. SUNDAY SESSION OF TRIPARTITE MILITARY COMMITTEE ADOPTED TIMETABLE FOR REMOVAL OF ALL ARMED ELEMENTS FROM POSITIONS IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE AS LOGICAL NEXT STEP IN CONSOLIDATING SECURITY. ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE AS ANNOUNCED BY PRIME MINISTRE KARAME JAN 25, ALL MILITIAMEN SHOULD VACATE THEIR POSITIONS IN PHASES BETWEEN 0600 HOURS JAN 26 AND 0600 HOURS JAN 27. LEBANESE ARMY AND INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (FSI) HAVE BEEN GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING SECURITY ON INTERNATIONAL THOROUGHFARES BUT IT IS EXPECTED THAT THESE FORCES MAY, IN FACT, COOPT ELEMENTS FROM PLA/PASC OR PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS (DEPENDING UPON AREA INVOLVED) TO ACCOMPLISH THIS AND OTHER MISSIONS THAT MAY BE ASSIGNED TO THEM. ACCORDING TO BEIRUT PRESS, UNITS ENGAGED IN THESE DUTIES WILL BE PROVIDED WITH DISTINCTIVE GREEN EMBLEM FOR IDENTITY PURPOSES.

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4. POLITICAL SCENE IS ACTIVE BUT CONSULTATIONS HAVE NOT ENTERED DECISIVE STAGE. KHADDAM MET JAN 25 WITH MARONITE CHRISTIAN LEADERS, INCLUDING PIERRE GEMAYEL (PHALANGE), CAMILLE CHAMOUN (NLP), CHARBEL KASSIS (MONKS), FUAD SHEMALI (GUARDIANS OF THE CEDAR), AND SHAKER ABU SULEIMAN (MARONITE LEAGUE) AND REPORTEDLY GAINED THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF SYRIAN INITIATIVE IN PRINCIPLE. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, KHADDAM GAVE ASSURANCES OF SYRIANS INTENTIONS TO WITHDRAW FROM SCENE ONCE POLITICAL SOLUTION ON THE TRACKS, BUT CHRISTIAN PARTICIPANTS REMAIN UNHAPPY LOT AND HAVE NOT YET SIGNED ON DOTTED LINE RE SPECIFICS OF POLITICAL REFORM. POLITICAL DEAL REMAINS UNDER DISCUSSION BUT AGREEMENT NOT YET ASSURED AND CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP WILL FACE DIFFICULTIES WITH RANK AND FILE IN MOUNT LEBANON, SOME OF WHOM ARE OPENLY SPEAKING OF SEEKING ISRAELI INTERVENTION IN THEIR BEHALF. SYRIANS MAY FIND THEMSELVES UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO PRODUCE RESULTS QUICKLY, AS WE ARE RECEIVING INCREASING INDICATIONS THAT LEBANESE MUSLIMS ARE LIKEWISE BEGINNING TO GRUMBLE ABOUT PALESTINIAN (AND SYRIAN) "OCCUPATION."

5. PRES FRANGIE, HAS NOT MADE ANTICIPATED PUBLIC STATEMENT RE POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION AND IT IS ANYONE'S

GUESS WHEN THAT NEWS WILL BREAK. HE APPARENTLY STILL INTENDS TO VISIT DAMASCUS, POSSIBLY IN TANDEM WITH KARAME, BUT REFUSES TO RESCHEDULE TRIP UNTIL CEASEFIRE AT LEAST IS FIRM. OTHER SOURCES, HOWEVER, CONTEND FRANGIE IS HOLDING OUT UNTIL ALL PLA AND OTHER FORCES WHICH ENTERED LEBANON FROM SYRIA ARE WITHDRAWN FROM COUNTRY. KARAME MEANDWHILE, WHOSE NEAR-RESIGNATION HAS BEEN EXPUNGED FROM THE RECORD, IS APPARENTLY WORKING ON PLANS FOR EXPANDED CABINET OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. TWO ALTERNATIVES PRESENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION ARE (A) GRAFTING ADDITIONAL MINISTERS ONTO PRESENT SIX, OR (B) KAREM RESIGNATION AND REAPPOINTMENT TO PRODUCE NEW (BUT UNQUESTIONABLY FAMILIAR) CABINET. WITH HIGHER MILITARY COMMITTEE CALLING THE SHOTS FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT, SEEMS LIKELY THAT CABINET EXPANSION WILL NOT OCCUR IMMINENTLY AND SOME KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS ARE BETTING THAT NEW GOVERNMENT IS PROJECT THAT WILL BEAR FRUIT ONLY AFTER TWO OR THREE MONTHS.

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6. NEW NORMALITY ON LOCAL SCENE HAS BREATHED SOME NEW LIFE INTO BEIRUT SOUKS, BUT REVIVAL OF ECONOMY IS LONG-TERM PROJECT. GOL IS TAKING MEASURES TO RELIEVE SERIOUS SHORTAGES THAT DEVELOPED OVER LAST THREE WEEKS OF NEAR PARALYSIS. TANK TRUCKS WITH FUEL OIL FROM ZAHRANI REFINERY (NEAR SIDON) HAVE MADE WELCOME REAPPEARANCE IN WEST BEIRUT, WITH HOSPITALS AND BAKERIES RECEIVING PRIORITY (AUB AND AUB HAVE RECEIVED SOME DELIVERIES). LEBANESE AUTHORITIES HAVE ANNOUNCED PLANS TO WITHDRAW 500 TONS OF WHEAT FROM PORT GRANERIES JAN 26 WITH WEST BEIRUT AGAIN FIRST IN LINE. WATER AND ELECTRICITY ARE BEING RESTORED TO AREAS WHERE THEY WERE OUT, BUT SOME RATIONING OF WATER WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY. FINALLY, AS ADDITIONAL BARBINGER OF BETTER TIMES (WE HOPE), TELEPHONE LINES TO EMBASSY WERE RESTORED MORNING JAN 26.

7. AIRPORT OPERATING WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES. SCATTERED REPORTS INDICATED THAT OUTBOUND BOOKINGS TO CAIRO AND ELSEWHERE ARE HEAVY.

LAMBRAKIS

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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DOHA
DHAHRAN
JERUSALEM
JIDDA
KUWAIT
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MANAMA
MOSCOW
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NICOSIA
PARIS
RABAT
SANA
TRIPOLI
TUNIS
TEHRAN
TEL AVIV
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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
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